

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9817

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2506

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, IN, UR, US

SUBJECT: INDIAN REACTION TO DIEGO RZRCIA

SUMMARY: DIEGO GARCIA TODAY TOOK OVER PARLIAMENT, THE PRESS AND MCGEORGE BUNDY'S ADDRESS. TRANSCENDENTAL ASPECTS OF KISSINGERIAN REALPOLITIK. THERE'KO EVEN BEEN A PROPOSAL THAT INDIA GO NUCLEAR. THE EMBASSY IS CALM, BUT HOPES SOMEONE IN WASHINGTON IS THINKING ABOUT ALL THIS. END SUMMARY

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER FACED A CALLING ATTENTION MOTION AND HOT QUESTIONING ON DIEGO GARCIA IN PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 19. IN A PREPARED STATEMENT, SWARAN SIQLGH NOTED INDIA'S CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR MAINTAINING THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE AND RELATED UN RESOLUTIONS, INDIA'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN AD HOC COMMITTEE, AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S STUDY OF GREAT POWER DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. WITH THIS BACKGROUND, HE SAID, THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE MILITARY FACILITIES IN DIEGO GARCIA ARE TO BE FURTHER EXPANDED BY THE UNITED STATES "HAS
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DEEPLY DISTURBED ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. WE HAVE CONVEYED OUR GRAVE CONCERN TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UK

AND THE US WHEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS MONTH THEY INFORMED US OF THESE PLANS." SINGP SAID INDIA WOULD COORDINATE ITS EFFORTS WITHOSEIFF OTHER COUNTRIES THAT OPPOSED THIS DEVELOPMENT "IN ORDER TO MOBILIZE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UNGA RESOLUTION WITH WHICH THIS EXPANSION OF MILITARY FACILITIES IN DIEGO GARCIA IS MANIFESTLY INCONSISTENT".

2. SINGH TURNED ASIDE NUMEROUS DEMANDS THAT INDIA CONDEMN AND TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE US BY INSISTING THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH WOULD BE TO COORDINATE INDIA'S EFFORTS WITH THOSE OF

OTHER COUNTRIES. HE SAID DIEGO GARCIA WAS UNRELATED TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE US AND INDIA'S COMMONWEALTH TIES. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF SINO-US COLLUSION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. SINGH DISMISSED AS ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION WESTERN PRESS REPORTS THAT INDIA HAD OFFERED BASE FACILITIES TO THE SOVIET UNION. INDIAN PORT FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE TO ALL FRIENDLY COUNTRIES ON AN EQUAL BASIS. THERE WAS NO INDICATION THE USSR HAVE BASE ELSEWHERE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE SOVIET ATTITUDE WAS POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY; THE USSR HAD STATED THE INDIAN OCEAN SHOULD REMAIN AN AREA OF PEACE. COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIAN MEMBER BUPESH GUPTA CASTIGATED AMBASSADOR KAUL S PROMOTING

ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE US AND FOR NOT HAVING THE GUTS TO SAY ANTHING ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA. GUPTA SAID KAUL SHOULD BE RECALLED AS AMBASSADOR TO THE US.

3. CAMPAIGNING FEBRUARY 19 IN UP, MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO THE PROPOSAL TO SET UP A NAVAL BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND CRITICISED THE JANA SANGH FOR NEVER CONDEMINING SUCH ACTIONS. SHE ALSO TERMED THE SOVIET UNION A GOOD FRIEND THAT HAD ALWAYS HELPED INDIA IN TIMES OF NEED AS WITH THE WHEAT LOAN.

4. RETIRED SOVIET GENERAL AND NOVOSTU OBSERVE SVYATOSLAV KOSOLOV, VISITING DELHI FOR A REUNION OF THE INDIAN EX-SERVICE LEAGUE, TOLD A "TIMES OF INDIA" INTERVIEWER FEBRUARY 19 THAT THE USSR HAD NO INTENTION OF SETTING UP NAVAL BASES IN SOCOTRA.
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HE SAID THERE WAS NO US-SOVIET RIVALRY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN; BUT UNLIKE AMERICA, THE USSR HAD NO IMPERIALISTIC AIMS TO PURSUE IN THE REGION. US BASES IN THE AREA WERE FOR MUCH MORE THAN JUST OCCUPYING A PLACE OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE. APPARENTLY, THE ANTI-SOVIET ANGLE WAS BEING USED TO CAMOUFLAGE IMPERIALIST ENDS. THE US WANTED TO DOMINATE NATIONS IN THE INDIA OCEAN REGION. KOSOLOV DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY US-SOVIET UNDERSTANDING ON THE INDIAN OCEAN; THE USSR HAD IN THE PAST TRIED TO ACHIEVE SOME KIND OF UNDERSTANDING BUT THE AMERICAN RESPONSE HAD BEEN NEGATIVE. THE SOVIET NAVAL ROLE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD

BE DEFENSIVE; IT HAD NEVER BLOCKADED SHIPS ON THE HIGH SEAS
OR PORTS OF UNFRIENDLY NATIONS AS THE US HAD.

5. WINDING UP A FEBRUARY 18-19 NEHRU UNIVERSITY SEMINOR ON THE
INDIAN OCEAN, FORMER INDIAN CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF NANDA SAID THAT
IN VIEW OF THE SUPER POWER RIVALRY AND MILITARIZATION OF THE OCEAN,
INDIA SOULD EXPAND HER OWN NAVAL POWER. THE HEAD OF THE DISARMAMENT
DIVISION AT THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CLAIMED THAT
IN THE ABSENCE OF A NUCLEAR POWER UNDERTAKING TO RESPECT THE
INDIAN OCEAN AS A NUCLEAR FREE PEACE ZONE, "INDIA WILL BE LEFT
WITH NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO STRENGTHEN HERSELF MILITARILY AS
A DOMINANT REGIONAL POWER AND BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED NUCLEAR POWER";
THE NUCLEAR POWERS ALONE WOULD BE BLAMED FOR THAT. MOST SPEAKERS
AND PAPERS ROUNDLY CONDEMNED THE US.

6. THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU HAS PUBLISHED
A PAPER ON DIEGO GARCIA BY S.K. GHOSH OF THE DELHI INSITUTE FOR
DEFENSE STUDIES AND ANALYSES. THE PAPER MAINTAINS THAT AN
ALLEGED INCREASE IN SOVIET CAPABILITY IS BEING USED BY THE USA
AND BRITAIN TO JUSTIFY THE US NAVAL BUILD-UP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN
WHICH WILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN A VERY SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET REACTION.

7. AN ADDRESS ON FEBRUARY 19 BY FORD FOUNDATION PRESIDENT
MCGEORGE BUNDY AT THE INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTER WAS INTERRUPTED
BY STUDENTS WHO STORMED THE ROSTRUM. AMIDST A STREAM OF ANTI-
US SLOGANS, THE STUDENTS DEMANDED WHY BUNDY WAS DISCUSSING
DISENGAGEMENT IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND NOT THE NEW ENGAGEMENT AT
DIEGO GACRIA. UNABLE TO COMPLETE HIS TALK, "A VISIBLY SHAKEN
MR. BUNDY WAS ESCORTED OUT BY THE SECURITY GUARD. THE SLOGAN
SHOUTING STUDENTS FOLLOWED..." (TIME OF INDIA PRINT PAGE).

A8. ALL THIS HAS BEEN PLAYED UP ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE DELHI
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PRESS. HEADLINES ON THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE WERE SOMEWHAT
SENSATIONALIST WITH THE "NATIONAL HERALD" CLAIMING "INDIA TO
LAUNCH DRIVE AGAINST NAVAL BASE MOVE". IN A BALANCED,
ANALYTICAL
PIECE ON THE "FURORE OVER DIEGO GARCIA", "TIMES OF INDIA"
EDITOR GIRILAL JAIN SAID THE US DECIION ON DIEGO GARCIA SHOULD
BE DISCUSSED IN THE CONTEXT OF COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE IN
THE PERSIAN GULF AND NOT IN TERMS OF THE UNATTAINABLE PRINCIPLE
OF EXCLUDING EXTERNAL POWERS FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN. THERE WAS
LITTLE INDIA COULD DO. DELHI WOULD NEED GOOD WILL IN A NUMBER
OF CAPITALS TO GET THE REQUIRED ASSISTANCE TO TIDE OVER THE ECONOMIC
CRISIS AND IT WILL BE LUCKY IN DAYS AHEAD IF IT CAN PROTECT
ITS OWN NARROWLY DEFINED INTERESTS.
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